

P O E M

Sacred to the M E M O R Y of

SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

By JAMES THOMSON. *K*

His Tibi me Rebus quædam divina Voluptas
Percipit, atque Horror; quòd sic Natura tuâ Vi
Tam manifesta patet ex omni Parte resecta. *LUC.*

D U B L I N:

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Essex-street, M D C C X X V I I.

Where may be had *Summer* a Poem, and *Winter* a Poem.



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To the Right Honourable

Sir Robert Walpole,

KNIGHT of the

Most Noble *Order* of the *Garter*.

S I R,



INCE I have ventur'd to write a Poem on a Gentleman who is universally acknowledg'd to be the Honour of our Country as a *Philosopher*, prompted by the same Ambition, I address it to her most illustrious *Patriot*.

Tho', by the wise Choice of the best of *Kings*, you are engag'd in the highest and most active Scenes of Life, balancing the Power of *Europe*, watching over our common Welfare, informing the whole Body of Society and Commerce, and even like Heaven dispensing Happiness to the Discontented

DEDICATION.

and Ungrateful ; tho' thus gloriously employ'd, yet are you not less attentive, in the Hour of Leisure, to the Variety, Beauty, and Magnificence of Nature, nor less delighted, and astonish'd at the Discoveries of the incomparable *Newton*. The same comprehensive Genius which Way soever it looks must have a steady, clear, and unbounded Prospect.

But not to encroach any further on your important Moments all devoted to the Good of Mankind, I once more plead the Dignity of my Subject for my Excuse in this Approach, and beg Leave to subscribe my self, with the sincerest Veneration,

SIR,

Your most faithful,

humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.



A

P O E M

Sacred to the Memory of

Sir ISAAC NEWTON.



HALL the great Soul of NEWTON quit
this Earth,
To mingle with his Stars, and every
Muse,
Astonish'd into Silence, shun the Weight
Of Honours due to his illustrious Name!
But what can Man? — Even now the Song of Light,

In

In Strains such as delight the Ear of God,
 Hail his Arrival on the Coasts of Bliss.
 Yet am not I deterr'd, tho' high the Theme,
 And sung to Harps of Angels, for with you,
Ethereal Flames! ambitious I aspire
 In Nature's general Symphony to join.

AND what new Wonders can ye show your Guest!
 Who, while on this dim Spot where Mortals toil
 Clouded in Dust, from *Motion's* simple Laws
 Could trace the boundless Hand of Providence,
 Wide-working thro' this universal Frame.

HAVE ye not listen'd while he bound the *Suns*,
 And *Planets* to their Spheres! Th' unequal Task
 Of Humankind till then. Oft had they roll'd
 O'er erring Man the Year, and oft disgrac'd
 The Pride of Schools, before their Course was known,
 Full in its Causes and Effects to Him,
 All-piercing Sage! Who sat not down and dreamt
 Romantic Schemes, defended by the Din
 Of specious Words, and Tyranny of Names,
 But bidding his amazing Mind attend,

And

And with heroick Patience Years on Years
 Deep-searching, saw at last the System dawn,
 And shine, of all his Race, on him alone.

WHAT were his Raptures then! how pure! how strong!
 And what the Triumphs of old Greece and Rome,
 By his diminish'd, but the Pride of Boys
 In some small Fray victorious! When instead
 Of shatter'd Parcel of this Earth usurp'd
 By Violence unmanly, and fore Deeds
 Of Cruelty and Blood, *Nature herself*
 Stood all subdu'd by him, and open laid
 Her every latent Glory to his View.

AND first our *solar System* he survey'd
 With accurate Ken, and by the mingling Power
 Of *Gravitation* and *Projection* saw
 The whole in silent Harmony revolve.
 Drawn to his lengthen'd Eye th' attending *Moons*,
 Design'd to chear remoter Planets, were
 By him in all their mix'd Proportions seen.
 He also fix'd the wandering *Queen of Night*,
 Whether she wanes into a scanty Orb,

Or waxing broad with her pale shadowy Light
 In a soft Deluge overflows the Sky.
 Her every Motion clear discerning, He
 Adjusted to th' obsequious *Main*, and taught,
 Why now the mighty *Mafs* of *Waters* swells
 Resistless, heaving on the broken *Rocks*,
 And the full River turning; till again
 The Tide revertive, unattracted, leaves
 A Yellow Waste of idle Sands behind.

Then breaking hence, he took his ardent Flight
 Thro' the blue Infinite; and every *Star*,
 Which the clear Concave of a Winter's Night
 Pours on the Eye, or Astronomic Tube,
 Far-stretching, snatches from the dark *Abyfs*,
 Or such as farther in successive Skies
 To Fancy only shine, at his Approach
 Blaz'd into *Suns*. Th'enlivening Centre each
 Of an harmonious System. All, combin'd,
 And rul'd unerring by that single Power
 Which draws the Stone projected to the Ground.

O UNPROFUSE Magnificence divine!
 O *Wisdom* truly perfect! thus to call

From

From a few Causes such a Scheme of Things,
 Effects so various, beautiful, and great,
 An Universe compleat! And O Belov'd
 Of Heaven! into th' Almighty's Councils thus
 To be admitted, and allow'd to scan
 The rising, moving, wide-establish'd Frame.

He too, unbaffled in his Aim, pursu'd
 The *Comet* thro' the long Elliptic Curve,
 As round innumerable Worlds he wound his Way,
 Till to the Forehead of the Evening-Sky
 Reduc'd, the blazing Wonder glares anew.

THE Heavens are all his own. Finish'd by him
 The fair Discovery lies; and every Eye
 May lay the useless Telescope aside,
 Unless it be to hold the great Acquests
 By *Newton* made: Who from the wild Domain
 Of the * *French Dreamer* rescu'd Heaven and Earth.
 All *Europe* stood appall'd; but found it vain
 To keep at Odds with Demonstration strong,

B

And

* *Des Cartes.*

And lingering to resist the awakening Force
Of Truth. At once their pleasing Visions fled,
With the gay Shadows of the Morning mix'd,
When *Newton* rose, our Philosophic Sun.

Th' Aerial Flow of *Sound* was known to Him,
From whence it first in wavy Circles breaks,
Till the touch'd Organ takes the Message in.
Nor could the darting *Beam*, of Speed immense,
Escape his switt Pursuit, and measuring Glance.
Even *Light* itself, which every thing displays,
Shone undiscover'd, till his brighter Mind
Untwisted all the shining Robe of Day;
And from the whitening, undistinguish'd Blaze,
Collecting every Ray into his Kind,
To the charm'd Eye educ'd the gorgeous Train
Of *Parent-Colours*. First the flaming *Red*
Sprung vivid forth; the tawny *Orange* next;
And then delicious *Yellow*; by whose Side
Fell the kind Beams of all-retreshing *Green*.
Then the pure *Blue* that swells autumnal Skies
Ætherial play'd; and then of sadder Hue
Emerg'd the deepen'd *Indico*, as when
The heavy-skirted Evening droops with Frost.

While

While the last Gleanings of refracted Light
 Dy'd in the fainting *Violet* away.
 These, when the Clouds distil the rosy Shower,
 Shine out distinct adown the watry Bow,
 While o'er our Heads the dewy Vision bends
 Delightful, melting on the Fields beneath.
 Myriads of mingling Dies from these result,
 And Myriads still remain, th' exhaustless Source
 Of Beauty ever-flushing, ever-new!

DID ever Poet image ought so fair,
 Dreaming in whispering Groves, by the hoarse Brook!
 Or Prophet, to whose Rapture Heav'n descends!
 Even now the setting Sun and liveri'd Clouds,
 Seen, *Greenwich*, from thy lovely Heights, declare
 How just, how beauteous the refractive Law.

THE noiseless *Tide of Time*, all bearing down
 To vast *Eternity's* unbounded Sea
 Where the green Islands of the Happy shine,
 He backward stem'd alone; and to it's Source
 Ascending, mark'd it's Periods, and hung out
 His Lights at equal Distances to guide
 Historian, wilder'd on his darksome Way.

BUT who can number up his Labours? Who
 His high Discoveries sing? When but a few
 Of the deep-studying Race can stretch their Minds
 To image what he knew, as clear as they
 The Truths self-evident with which he link'd
 His farthest Views. For is there ought that's great,
 That's wonderful, and hard, deterring Search?
 That was his Prize! and worthy of his Toil
 Unfailing, Who the lonely *Monarch* reign'd
 Of *Science* thin-inhabited below.

WHAT Wonder then that his *Devotion* swell'd
 Responsive to his Knowledge! For could he,
 Whose piercing mental Eye diffusive saw
 The finish'd University of Things,
 In all its Order, Magnitude, and Parts,
 Forbear incessant to adore that Power
 Who fills, sustains, and actuates the whole.

SAY, ye who best can tell, ye happy few,
 Who saw him in the softest Lights of Life,
 All unwithheld, indulging to his Friends
 The vast, unborrow'd Treasures of his Mind,
 O speak the wondrous Man! how mild, how calm,

How

How greatly humble, how divinely good,
 How firm, establish'd on eternal Truth,
 Pure as his Faith, and active as his Love,
 Fervent in doing well, with every Nerve
 Still pressing on, forgetful of the Past,
 And panting for Perfection! far above
 Those little Cares, and visionary Joys
 That so befool the fond, impassion'd Heart
 Of over-cheated, ever-trusting Man.

AND say, ye downward, gloomy-minded Tribes,
 Ye who, unconscious of those nobler Flights
 That reach impatient at immortal Life,
 Against the Prime, indearing Privilege
 Of *Being* dare contend, say can a Soul
 Of such extensive, deep, tremendous Powers,
 Enlarging still, be but a finer Breath
 Of Spirits dancing thro' their Tubes awhile,
 And then for ever lost in vacant Air?

BUT hark! Methinks I hear a warning Voice,
 Solemn as when some awful Change is come,
 Sound thro' the World--" *He's dead.--The Measure's full,*
 " *And I resign my Charge.*—Ye mouldering Stones

How

That

That build the towring Pyramid, the proud
 Triumphal Arch, the Monument effac'd
 By ruthless Ruin, and whate'er supports
 The worship'd Name of grey Antiquity,
 Down to the Dust! What Grandeur can ye boast
 While *Newton* lifts his Column to the Skies
 Beyond the Waste of Time! — Let no weak Drop
 Be shed for him. The Beauty in her Bloom
 Cut off, the Joyous Youth, and darling Child,
 These are the Tombs that claim the tender Tear,
 And Elegiac Song, but *Newton* calls
 For other Notes of Gratulation high,
 That now he wanders thro' those endless Worlds
 He here so well descry'd, and wondering talks,
 And Hymns their Author with his glad Compeers.

O BRITAIN'S Boast! Whether with Angels thou
 Sittest in dread Discourse, or Fellow-Saints
 Who joy to see the Honour of their Kind;
 Or whether mounted on Cherubic Wing,
 Thy swift Career is with the whirling Spheres,
 Comparing Things with Things, in Rapture lost
 And lowly Adoration for that Light
 So plenteous ray'd into thy Mind below,

From

From Light himself, O look with Pity down
 On Humankind, a frail, erroneous Race!
 Assuage the Madness of a frantic World!
 But chiefly o'er thy Country's Cause preside,
 And be her *Genius* call'd! Her Council steer,
 Correct her Manners, and inspire her Youth!
 For, guilty as she is, she brought thee forth,
 And glorious in thy Name; she points thee out
 To all her Sons, and bids them eye thy Star:
 While in Expectance of th' arrousing Blast,
 When Time shall be no more, thy sacred Dust
 Sleeps with her Kings, and dignifies the Scene.

THE END.



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